

Delegation Meets with General Petraeus, President Karzai

Washington, D.C. – U.S. Rep. Tom Rooney (FL-16) visited Afghanistan this week with a Congressional delegation led by House Speaker John Boehner that began Saturday in Iraq and also visited Pakistan. Rooney issued the following statement on the two-day visit in Afghanistan:

“The challenge in the final phase of our mission in Afghanistan is to capitalize on the gains we have made over the last several months,” Rooney said. “The groundwork for transition to the Afghan National Security Force is more apparent than my last visit two years ago. The strategy of General Petraeus and the courageous efforts of our troops have given the U.S. the real opportunity to prevent future attacks from here again, while giving the people of Afghanistan a chance to live in peace outside of intimidation from the Taliban.

“Pakistan will play a major role in preventing future attacks from Afghanistan, as the worst of the enemy hides out, regroupes, and recruits leadership there. The other major obstacle we face is the corruption in government and lack of organized rule of law in Afghanistan. The police are showing improvement but still lag behind the Afghan Army in their development.

“If President Karzai can successfully lead and make the transition to the Afghan National Security Force as we draw down in July, Afghanistan's future will be as bright as it has ever been, and we will have successfully taken away another haven for terrorism to thrive.”

The delegation met with President Hamid Karzai, and received updates from General David Petraeus, the commander of U.S. and international military forces; U.S. Ambassador to Afghanistan Karl Eikenberry; Lt. General David Rodriguez, the commander of NATO-International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) Joint Command; Lt. General Bill Caldwell, the commander of NATO Training Mission – Afghanistan; U.S. Embassy-Kabul senior diplomats; the commanders and senior civilian representatives in Regional Command-East, Regional Command-South, and Regional Command-Southwest; and U.S. troops from Florida and the other Members' home states.

Rooney sits on the House Armed Services Committee and the Intelligence Committee. He served in the U.S. Army JAG Corps and taught constitutional law at West Point.

Photos of the visit are available at: <http://www.facebook.com/pages/Tom-Rooney/117697790448#!/pages/Tom-Rooney/117697790448?sk=photos>.

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